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Committee on Conferences
Substantive session

Draft report

Addendum

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II. Control and limitation of documentation

B. Provision of written meeting records to subsidiary organs of the General Assembly

Introduction and overview

1. In paragraph 18 of resolution 53/208 B of 18 December 1998, the General Assembly requested the Secretariat to continue consultations with the secretariats of intergovernmental bodies with a view to informing them on the speedy issuance of unedited verbatim transcripts and the cost savings derived therefrom, and encouraging them to follow the example of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space in carrying out the experiment with unedited verbatim transcripts so as to enable the Committee on Conferences to make final recommendations on the matter.

2. In addition, in paragraph 21 of the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to ensure that summary and verbatim records were issued in all six official languages concurrently.

3. At the Committee's 421st meeting, on 31 August 1999, the representative of the Secretariat presented an oral report on the question.

4. While the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space continued to use unedited verbatim transcripts with results that the Committee found satisfactory, during the previous year there had been no indications pointing to the likely use of unedited verbatim transcripts by other subsidiary organs of the General Assembly.

99-25083 (E)

5. With their agreement, some subsidiary organs had been provided with transcripts on an experimental basis during the previous three years. Their conclusion, in general terms, was that the meeting records they currently received were better suited to their needs, a consideration also reflected by the Assembly in paragraph 19 of its resolution 53/208 B, in which it emphasized that the choice of unedited verbatim transcripts should be consistent with the needs of the bodies concerned.

6. The General Assembly's request for the simultaneous distribution of all language versions of meeting records was being given due consideration as it applies to verbatim records, since summary records, like all other documents, had always been distributed simultaneously in all languages.

Discussion

7. The view was expressed that intergovernmental bodies other than the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law could use unedited verbatim transcripts of their proceedings.

8. It was acknowledged, however, that such transcripts might not be adequate for the needs of certain bodies, as evidenced by the very small number of subsidiary organs that were willing to use them.

9. It was nevertheless proposed that the Committee reiterate its request to subsidiary organs to consider the use of unedited verbatim transcripts, in view of the considerable cost savings that could be realized.

Conclusions and recommendations

10. The Committee took note of the oral report on the provision of written meeting records to subsidiary organs of the General Assembly.

11. The Committee reiterated its request to subsidiary organs of the General Assembly to consider the use of unedited verbatim transcripts of their proceedings.

12. The Committee took note of the very limited number of subsidiary organs that had resorted to the use of unedited verbatim transcripts.